



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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GENERAL GOVERNMENT  
DIVISION

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The Honorable William R. Cotter  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Cotter:

On August 7, 1974, you requested that we examine several matters related to Federal drug abuse efforts in the Hartford, Connecticut, area, and the effectiveness of Federal drug task forces in other cities. In discussion with your office, it was agreed that we would not evaluate the effectiveness of Federal drug task forces in other cities nor would we make recommendations concerning the need for additional Federal drug efforts in Hartford.

As agreed with your office, this report provides information on the following questions:

- Has the Hartford Drug Task Force been abandoned?
- What are the most recent estimates of the use of illicit drugs on the East Coast, New England, and the Hartford area?
- What drug seizures, arrests, and convictions have been made by the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Hartford District Office and the Hartford Drug Task Force?
- What Federal manpower is available to combat drug problems in Hartford?
- What plans does DEA have to provide more manpower to the Hartford area?

A summary of our review follows. The enclosure discusses each question in greater detail. We found that:

- The Hartford Drug Task Force, one of about 40 Federal-State-local drug task forces administered by DEA, has

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not been abandoned. However, the mission of the task force was changed during fiscal year 1974 from a street-level enforcement unit responsible for the arrest of heroin pushers in Hartford to a drug intelligence unit responsible for developing strategic and tactical intelligence on a Statewide basis.

--DEA officials in Boston and Hartford directed the shift from enforcement to intelligence in line with the DEA policy of allowing DEA regional directors flexibility in adapting the form of the task forces to best meet the needs of their regions. The existence of several enforcement groups--the Hartford Drug Task Force, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funded Hartford Capitol Region Crime Squad, and the State and local police narcotics units--all active in street-level enforcement, created jurisdictional problems. This, along with a recent DEA emphasis on drug intelligence, prompted the Regional Director to conclude that a shift in the activity of the Hartford Drug Task Force was warranted to make the best use of limited drug control resources and to develop an intelligence capability.

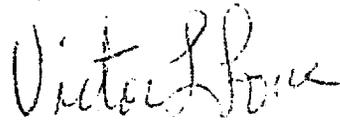
--According to DEA, the illicit drug situation in Hartford parallels that of the East Coast. Heroin use had decreased recently but Federal officials are fearful of a renewed use of this hard drug. Also, the appearance on the street of cocaine, dangerous drugs, and marihuana has increased. Brown heroin from Mexico is becoming increasingly more available. It was reported in 1973 by the Statewide Enforcement Coordinating Committee (a Connecticut drug enforcement coordinating agency) that there were 5,000 to 8,000 heroin addicts in Connecticut. DEA estimates that as of December 31, 1973, there were over 500,000 heroin abusers in the country with about 40 percent of them living in New York City.

--Both the DEA Hartford District Office and the Hartford Drug Task Force have been instrumental in arresting drug traffickers and seizing substantial amounts of illicit drugs. The District Office's enforcement efforts have been focused on mid- and upper-level traffickers, while the Hartford task force operations until recently were directed toward street-level pushers.

--In addition to the task force, the DEA Hartford District Office, the LEAA funded Capitol Region Crime Squad, the Connecticut State Police, and the Hartford police are engaged in drug law enforcement in the Hartford area. There are currently no Hartford police on the Hartford Drug Task Force and no current plans by DEA to include any because of the Statewide intelligence mission of the task force. DEA has no plans to provide more manpower to the Hartford area.

As requested by your office, we did not obtain formal agency comments. However, we discussed the results of our review with DEA officials and considered their comments in preparing this report. We plan no further distribution of this report unless you agree or publicly announce its contents.

Sincerely yours,



Victor L. Lowe  
Director

Enclosure

INFORMATION CONCERNINGTHE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION'SHARTFORD DRUG TASK FORCEAS OF AUGUST 31, 1974HAS THE DRUG TASK FORCE IN  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, BEEN ABANDONED?

The Hartford Drug Task Force--under the responsibility of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)--has not been abandoned. The task force is considered "active" by DEA and has applied for fiscal year 1975 funding of about \$82,200 from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). DEA does not plan to eliminate the task force; however, during fiscal year 1974 its mission was changed from a street-level enforcement unit to a drug intelligence unit. Under its new mission, the task force is no longer responsible for arresting street-level heroin traffickers. Rather, the task force is responsible for developing Statewide strategic and tactical intelligence and maintaining liaison with State and local drug enforcement groups.

DEA Boston and Hartford officials directed the shift from enforcement to intelligence in line with the policy of allowing DEA regional directors flexibility in adapting the form of the task forces to best meet the needs of their regions. The existence of several enforcement groups, all active in street-level enforcement, created jurisdiction problems. This, along with a recent DEA emphasis on intelligence, prompted the Regional Director to conclude that a shift in the activity of the Hartford task force was warranted in order to make best use of the limited drug control resources and to develop an intelligence capability.

Change in mission

As a result of Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1973, DEA assumed responsibility for the Hartford Drug Task Force--along with other Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE) task forces--in July 1973. Under ODALE, an objective of State and local task forces (including the Hartford Drug Task Force) was to interdict heroin on the street through the arrest of street-level heroin traffickers (pushers) by task force teams made up of Federal, State, and local agents.

Each ODALE task force was directed by a Department of Justice attorney and was staffed--along with State and local enforcement agents--with Federal enforcement personnel from other Federal agencies,

such as the former Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, the U.S. Customs Service, and the Internal Revenue Service. Salaries of State and local agents and equipment and operating costs of the task force were generally funded by LEAA's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice under Part D, Title I, of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 3741-3747). Under this authority LEAA may make demonstration and special grants for improving and developing new methods of law enforcement.

With ODALE out of existence, the newly created DEA continued the task force program with some modifications. The mission of the task force program under DEA is to provide a unified drug enforcement capability in the community with total integration of State and local police into the task forces. The goal of the task forces was changed from placing major emphasis on street-level heroin traffickers to the inclusion of mid-level traffickers in all types of drugs and to upper-level traffickers if cases lead to them.

DEA policy on task forces was intentionally kept general in recognition that drug problems differ in different geographic areas. No attempt was made to define a uniform task force with the intent that the "how" and the "form" could be best determined by local DEA officials and local authorities.

#### Staffing and funding

Organizationally, DEA regional directors are responsible to the DEA Administrator for task forces in their regions. The task forces are headed by DEA special agents. The use of Department of Justice attorneys has been eliminated and the detailing of staff from other Federal agencies is done on an as-needed basis rather than having staff permanently assigned. The Administrator of DEA would have the final say on any unilateral decision to close down a task force. State and local participants may withdraw their support of the task force at any time.

LEAA's Institute for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice continues to fund State and local inputs to the task force program. DEA policy, however, provides that salaries of State and local participants--on newly formed task forces--should not be paid with LEAA funds unless it is in the best interest of drug enforcement efforts in the community. LEAA has agreed to fund the task force program with \$9.1 million for fiscal year 1975.

The Hartford Drug Task Force is one of about 40 Federal-State-local task forces administered by DEA. The task forces are located in cities throughout the United States with approximately 210 DEA agents working with 400 local and State police.

- Identifying the mode of operation of drug traffickers and organizations operating in Connecticut.
- Making intelligence probes through surveillance and undercover work to achieve an intelligence objective. The probes cannot overlap or compete with enforcement activities.
- Debriefing of informants.
- Liaison with State and local enforcement groups.
- Referring intelligence to appropriate Federal, State, or local enforcement agencies.

The Hartford Drug Task Force requested \$82,200 for fiscal year 1975 to cover salaries, equipment, travel, supplies, and operating expense. As stated in the grant application, the task force will no longer be furnished with motor vehicles and it is planned in most instances that operations will be conducted using DEA logistical support. Also, radio and equipment purchased under prior LEAA funding may be redeployed to other more operational task forces where needed.

WHAT ARE THE MOST RECENT ESTIMATES  
ABOUT THE USE OF HEROIN AND OTHER  
DANGEROUS DRUGS ON THE EAST COAST,  
NEW ENGLAND, AND THE HARTFORD AREA?

According to DEA, heroin and dangerous drugs are heavily used on the East Coast, and in the New England and Hartford areas. New England has had a problem with the flow of illicit drugs due to its proximity to New York City, a prime destination for illegal drugs. New York City is believed to have the highest rate of addiction in the country. Hartford's nearness to New York City provides drug abusers with an easily available market place.

The drug situation in Hartford, according to local DEA officials, parallels that of the East Coast. It appears that there has been a substantial decrease in the use of heroin in the past few years. The street-level purity of heroin has dropped from 10 percent to 3 1/2 percent and the price has more than doubled. However, brown heroin from Mexico is becoming increasingly more visible on the streets of all eastern cities including Hartford. The use of cocaine, methamphetamine (speed), dangerous drugs, and marihuana is on the upswing.

In 1973 the Statewide Enforcement Coordinating Committee (a Connecticut drug enforcement coordinating agency) reported that there were 5,000 to 8,000 heroin addicts in Connecticut. In 1973 DEA estimated that there were over 500,000 heroin abusers in the country with about 40 percent of them living in New York City. Statistics on the number of addicts for 1974 are not available, but the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention has stated that through January 1974 the trend of an increasing heroin addiction rate has been reversed in the last 2 years.

On October 7, 1974, the Director of the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention stated before a congressional committee that evidence indicates a possible upsurge in heroin usage. He stated that, "In recent months we have become aware of a very important phenomenon: an unexpected increase in heroin addiction in smaller cities like Macon, Georgia; Des Moines, Iowa; or Jackson, Mississippi. This has led us to speculate that drug use radiates out from the major population centers, and can be expected to hit the smaller cities and eventually the rural areas, after a reasonably predictable time lag."

DEA officials have also warned of a possible upsurge in the supply of heroin on the East Coast due to the lifting of the ban on the production of opium by Turkey. This apprehension was heightened by the recent seizure in New York City of over 150 pounds of white European heroin with a street value of \$112 million. This was one of the largest single seizures of heroin in the U.S.

WHAT DRUG ARRESTS AND SEIZURES HAVE  
BEEN MADE BY DEA'S HARTFORD DISTRICT  
OFFICE AND BY THE HARTFORD DRUG TASK FORCE?

The number of traffickers arrested by the DEA Hartford District Office during the last several years by class of traffickers is shown below. Class I and II traffickers are considered upper-level traffickers dealing in substantial quantities of illicit drugs; class III's are considered mid-level traffickers; and class IV's are mostly street-level drug pushers.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Arrested</u>				
	<u>Class I</u>	<u>Class II</u>	<u>Class III</u>	<u>Class IV</u>	<u>Total</u>
1972	0	6	90	13	109
1973	3	7	67	21	98
1974 (through Sept. 1)	2	1	56	30	89

Arrest data coupled with conviction data show whether drug traffickers are being immobilized. Convictions for DEA Hartford District Office arrests during the last several years, along with the status of each arrest, are as follows:

<u>Persons arrested</u>		<u>Status as of September 1, 1974</u>		
<u>Year</u>	<u>Number<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>Convictions</u>	<u>Dismissals</u>	<u>Pending</u>
1972	112	77	13	22
1973	105	33	11	61 <sup>b</sup>
1974	89	--	--	89 <sup>b</sup>
(through Sept. 1)				

<sup>a</sup>Total arrests shown in this table does not precisely agree with total arrests shown in the prior table because, according to DEA Hartford officials, the data came from different source documents with differing cutoff dates. The differences are minor.

<sup>b</sup>Cases of a large number of persons arrested in 1973 and 1974 are still pending because not enough time has elapsed for final court disposition.

Unlike the DEA District Office, which is geared toward arrest and immobilization of mid- and upper-level traffickers, the task force's operation has primarily been directed toward street- and lower-level traffickers. Accordingly, most of the task force arrests are class IV traffickers. A precise breakdown of the number of arrests by class of traffickers was not available. A recent review by the Hartford DEA District Office of arrests by the task force showed the following:

<u>Persons arrested</u>		<u>Status as of August 12, 1974</u>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Convictions</u>	<u>Dismissals</u>	<u>Acquittals</u>	<u>Pending</u>
1972	101	28	62	1	10
1973	68	21	14	0	33 <sup>a</sup>
1974	21	0	1	0	20 <sup>a</sup>
(through August 12)					

<sup>a</sup>Cases of a large number of persons arrested in 1973 and 1974 are still pending because not enough time has elapsed for final court disposition.

The DEA Hartford district office purchased and/or seized the following amounts of illicit drugs from 1972 through September 1, 1974.

<u>Illicit drug purchased and/or seized</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974 through Sept. 1</u>
Heroin	2,286 grams	834 grams	819 grams
Cocaine	3,495 grams	4,048 grams	369 grams
Marihuana	1,006 pounds	534 pounds	271 pounds
LSD	364 grams	13,684 dosage units	13,638 dosage units
Methamphetamine	463 grams	2,306 grams	93 grams
Barbituates	6,000 dosage units	--	--
Amphetamines	--	50,753 dosage units	21,480 dosage units
Hashish Oil	--	5.6 pounds	5.5 pounds

The DEA Hartford office also seized one clandestine methamphetamine laboratory in Milford, Connecticut, in 1973 and two other clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in western Massachusetts in 1974.

According to the fiscal year 1975 grant application for the Hartford Drug Task Force, in fiscal year 1974--before the task force became strictly an intelligence unit--it removed from the illicit market 530 grams of heroin, 124.6 grams of cocaine, 235 pounds of marihuana, and over 800 dosage units of miscellaneous drugs. Seizure statistics for the task force prior to fiscal year 1974 were not available.

WHAT FEDERAL MANPOWER IS AVAILABLE  
TO COMBAT DRUG PROBLEMS IN HARTFORD?

In addition to the four members of the task force (two DEA agents and two Connecticut State Troopers), the Hartford DEA District Office had on board 14 Special Agents and 4 Compliance Investigators as of August 31, 1974. The Hartford District Office is responsible for the eastern part of DEA's Region I which encompasses Connecticut, eastern Massachusetts, and southern New Hampshire. The following manpower figures for the last several years show that the number of Federal agents allocated and actually assigned to combat the drug problem in the Hartford area has increased slightly.

<u>As of date</u>	<u>DEA Hartford District Office</u>				<u>Hartford Drug Task Force</u>	
	<u>Special Agents</u>		<u>Compliance Investigators</u>		<u>Federal Special Agents</u>	<u>Total on board</u>
	<u>Ceiling</u>	<u>On board</u>	<u>Ceiling</u>	<u>On board</u>	<u>On board<sup>a</sup></u>	
8/31/74	17	14	4	4	2	20
6/30/74	13	12	4	4	2	18
6/30/73	15	11	4	4	2	17
7/31/72	15	14	2	3	0	17

<sup>a</sup>Ceiling allocations are included within the Hartford District Office ceiling for Special Agents.

Also located in Hartford is a Metropolitan Narcotics and Dangerous Drug Enforcement Group (MEG). MEG units are partially funded by LEAA and are staffed with local police from various jurisdictions which unite to combat street-level drug abuse in a common metropolitan or suburban area. The Hartford MEG, known as the Capitol Region Crime Squad, is one of five MEG units which encompass the entire State of Connecticut. The Hartford MEG unit is staffed with about 15 local police. The five MEG units in Connecticut are coordinated through a Statewide Enforcement Coordinating Committee also located in East Hartford. In addition, the local Hartford police and a drug abuse unit of the Connecticut State Police are also active in drug enforcement in the Hartford area.

ARE THERE PLANS BY DEA TO PROVIDE  
MORE MANPOWER TO THE HARTFORD AREA  
IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE?

Local and regional DEA officials indicated to us that the Hartford DEA District Office could use an additional four to six Special Agents which would permit the formation of a second enforcement group. DEA officials in Hartford also told us that they are attempting to gain a representative from the Statewide Enforcement Coordinating Committee for full-time duty on the task force. However, DEA headquarters has no plans to increase the Federal manpower assigned to the Hartford area beyond the 17 Special Agents and 4 Compliance Investigators authorized as of August 31, 1974. This is due to budget constraints and the high priority of increased enforcement at the Mexican border.

Normally, a State planning agency organized to administer LEAA grants is the LEAA grantee for a task force or several task forces in an area. However, for five of the seven task forces located in DEA's New York and Boston regions--including the Hartford Drug Task Force--the grantee is a private citizen who is also the grant administrator.

#### Structure and operations

The structure and operations of the Hartford Drug Task Force have been changed under DEA. During fiscal year 1974 there were several DEA agents, Connecticut State Troopers, Hartford police officers, and Department of Justice special attorneys assigned to the task force. The number of enforcement personnel assigned fluctuated during the year. In July 1974 the Department of Justice special attorney and another attorney on the staff resigned. The task force was composed of two DEA agents and two Connecticut State Troopers when we visited it on August 28, 1974. According to DEA officials, the two Hartford police officers were released due to the Statewide intelligence mission of the task force and its increased activity outside of the Hartford area.

The operations of the Hartford Drug Task Force slowly changed from local street-level investigations to Statewide drug intelligence gathering and analysis. In October 1973, according to DEA records, the Hartford Drug Task Force changed its planned operations from street-level activities to the investigation of mid- and upper-level heroin traffickers throughout the State; the plan being that the task force would make substantive "buys" and debrief informants in order to establish conspiracy-type investigations on mid- and upper-level traffickers.

In May 1974 the task force was restructured by DEA field officials into an intelligence unit. Its responsibilities include collection and analysis of intelligence on a Statewide basis for strategic and tactical purposes and serving as a liaison with State and local enforcement agencies. According to Hartford DEA personnel, copies of investigative reports generated by the DEA district office and other State and local sources will be screened by the task force for possible development of conspiracy cases. When intelligence indicates a possible conspiracy, the case will be turned over to the DEA enforcement group for further development.

Some of the planned activities of the task force--as an intelligence unit--include:

--Developing data on drug trafficking trends in Connecticut.